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MISSILES FOR FRANCE?

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Our refusal to aid France in developing her nuclear deterrent has never lacked American critics. Should we not seek an accommodation with General de Gaulle, trading missile technology and components for some other cooperation? Lately more seem to be saying that we should. They note that France is well on the road toward her force de frappe, despite our opposition which has embittered French officials and made their program slower and more expensive. The bitterness and higher cost leave France both less willing and less able to support common enterprises, including modern French divisions to NATO and toleration of American-controlled nuclear weapons upon her territory. These are unpleasant consequences of American policy, especially when inflicted upon one honored major ally and not another. If we supply Skybolt missiles to the United Kingdom for Bomber Command, should we not assist France in some comparable way? Especially if France pays for it and eases our troubled balance of payments?

So the critics argue, and with considerable force. But far more

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important than Franco-American relations is America's arms policy toward NATO and the world, which seeks to arrest the proliferation of nuclear powers, not to speed it. To this end we seek many means, with none more important than persistence in one message to would-be aspirants: "If you go toward independent nuclear capabilities, you will go it alone. Then the road promises to be long, costly, and bitter. And for what?" If this be our theme, the painfulness of the French experience is a forceful example to others. For France we regret the burdens, and no doubt seek to lessen their impact by any compromises that can be accommodated within our basic arms policy. But abandonment of this policy can hardly be acceptable. Are we now to give evidence to the cynics who say that it is stubbornness that pays? Should other nations be induced to get into like nuclear programs nearly as onerous to us as to them in the expectation that we will bail them out with military aid? The real test of our policy toward France is measured in reactions elsewhere. Beyond the incentives it may supply for emulating or not emulating France, what we do will speak eloquently for the constancy of American foreign policy.

One doubts that American arms policy has been ideal, or that its many spokesmen have expressed clearly the same philosophy toward NATO and nuclear arms. So probably we have affronted France more than we needed to, and should articulate one consistent philosophy better. If some of its implications are unpleasant to our allies, then it is all the more important to show these implications within the full context that embodies others. Where we seem inflexible we must be seen to be thoughtfully resistant, not just stubborn. Also we need to hunt for constructive alternatives that, unlike an independent national deterrent, meet legitimate French needs without an unacceptable compromise of our deeper mutual interests. These criticisms, however, should be tempered by appreciation of what is being done, and by awareness of how intractable some of the problems are. While our publicly expressed nuclear philosophy may be incomplete, there is more to it than is commonly recognized. One has only to read the defense statements and speeches of President Kennedy, Secretary Rusk, and Secretary McNamara to perceive much of a unified doctrine. A responsible critic of our policy on nuclear diffusion can no more neglect this doctrine than he can the stated or implied French doctrine. The key strategic issues that lie behind foreign policy are posed neatly in the French expressions: What converts a force de frappe into a force de dissuasion? How is nuclear force to be used, under what circumstances, in order to dissuade what nation from doing what?

One prominent feature in American doctrine is that nuclear force not be used at all save in direct retaliation in kind or where the defense of freedom leaves no feasible alternative. We have not forsworn the nuclear initiative; ours is not the "no first use" policy that some strategists have proposed. But the change from 1954 simplicity about "massive retaliation" is as unmistakable as it is natural. To shrink from unleashing nuclear violence is not cowardly where alternative defense is available; it is prudent when retaliation and counter-retaliation can cycle easily to excessive levels of damage; and it is politic when even those we propose to defend are likely to view nuclear weapons as symbols of their destruction rather than their defense. Hence the emphasis upon strong conventional arms to raise the "threshold" of violence above which we are driven to use nuclear weapons first. Conventional arms are not to be viewed exclusively as alternatives to nuclear arms, however, for an enemy is likely to find a nuclear response more credible when he must crash through a thick shield of conventional forces in an unmistakably major attack.

Thus the United States favors a complete deterrent for NATO, and naturally find most lacking the conventional component that older doctrine disavowed. When our allies plead scarce resources, our doctrine suggests concentration upon neglected Shield forces. Diverting resources to a series of national nuclear forces is serious when Shield deficiencies are glaring, and when France, for example, appears to be spending about one per cent of her GNP upon the force de frappe. Interdependence is more than a nice word when aversion to it is this costly. Nonetheless, the financial aspect is distinctly

secondary. If the military function of the force de frappe promised to harmonize with our strategic retaliatory forces in all respects, we could do less of the same strategic job as they did more. Then an American Secretary of Defense could himself offset much of the added financial burden by reductions in American strategic forces, and inter-allied would become merely inter-service rivalry. But such a trade is not in prospect. The force de frappe promises acute disharmony. Militarily, it threatens to interfere with the functioning of our nuclear deterrent; politically, it erodes the basis for allied trust in this deterrent.

NATO members must be confident that their allies will honor their pledges to aid attacked countries. The greater the threat, the greater the need for confidence. Yet if one French motive is prestige, another is open doubt that America can be relied upon to invoke the supreme deterrent after Soviet attacks that are confined to Europe, no matter how aggressive and destructive they are. The dread logic is familiar: because a big nuclear strike risks suicide for its launcher, it is not credible that it will be launched when one's homeland has not been attacked. If not credible, it will not deter a bold enemy from attacks elsewhere. Clearly there is something in the argument, but no such misleadingly simple formulation can be allowed to stand. For if defense of one's homeland is the only key to nuclear credibility, the force de frappe also yields no credible defense for attacks confined to Germany, or to Turkey, and so on. Members are driven back to self-defense where it matters most, while

enjoined somehow to preserve collective defense where it matters least.

West Germany is commonly cited as the next likely claimant for help toward a national deterrent, because she is an exposed and major power. No prospect arouses greater passions in NATO, for World War II memories run deep, as do apprehensions about Soviet reactions that are likewise founded in scarred memories. Beyond inflamed emotions, moreover, lies the perception that Berlin, unification, boundaries, and unrest in East Germany are unresolved problems. These can trigger violence whether coldly intended by the Soviets or not; and violence can grow, especially because the West is driven to join in the distasteful business of threat and counter-threat in order to maintain its position. Should control over strategic nuclear arms then be put in the hands of West Germany where war in Central Europe is least unlikely, with the act itself constituting a tacit acknowledgment by the United States that the big deterrent is no longer sufficiently credible? Even if such a course made strategic sense, it would certainly arouse intense quarrels within NATO. Opposition to such a course throughout British and Scandinavian political parties and peoples is apparent, but is not confined to them. If one wants to cater to the Soviet aim of splitting NATO, here is a way to do it.

And what about lesser powers in NATO who would find nuclear strike forces for themselves, even with generous help, less feasible or more abhorrent? Beyond fears aroused by nuclear diffusion to others, there is the affront to prestige. The French claim that a force de frappe is needed for first-class status in the alliance, and if we should appear to agree, we stigmatize the others. In an alliance where all members are proud, what could be more divisive?

II

NATO unity demands a better answer for nuclear defense, and American policy and prospective capabilities already supply one. There is, first and foremost, our pledge. That we view and express ourselves as part of NATO, and not apart from NATO, is mandatory, as are the deeds that back the words. Our military presence in Europe must not be forgotten. An effective Soviet surprise attack upon West Germany could hardly avoid some of our nuclear capabilities and would probably kill more American than German soldiers, and certainly many more Americans than Frenchmen. To further enhance the credibility of American nuclear response after so direct an attack upon us and our allies, if that response be needed, our strike capabilities greatly exceed those required to cover only Soviet cities. We can employ the strategy of a rich nuclear power, not a poor one; and contrary to popular belief, there remains a vast difference between the two.

The difference lies not so much in greater numbers of retaliatory instruments, although these are important, as in their greater protection and more sophisticated planning and continuing control. We obviously could and might launch the all-out strike that fits the usual image. This strike would be designed to minimize Soviet capabilities to counter-retaliate, which implies that we would not shrink from killing Russian civilians where such grisly damage was a by-product of smashing Soviet retaliatory capabilities. But in cold self-interest, as well as moral revulsion, we might well choose to do otherwise. What our strategic plenty buys is the ability to choose among alternative tactics,

each of which poses so formidable a threat to Soviet interests that it is a compelling deterrent even where self-imposed restraint is involved. What strategic poverty would buy is a capability so much smaller and less sophisticated that, in order to pose a formidable deterrent, it must credibly promise to be used in as blunt and bloody a manner as possible. City-killing is commonly assumed to be the easy job, and to this end proposed small national deterrent forces are directed. City-sparing in otherwise full-scale general nuclear war is a heresy that, consistent with formidable deterrence, can be entertained only by a big nuclear power. Here lies the novelty of an American policy that NATO, above all, needs to understand. At Ann Arbor on June 16th Secretary McNamara stated bluntly that, "principal military objectives, in the event of a nuclear war stemming from a major attack on the alliance, should be the destruction of the enemy's military forces, not of his civilian population."

Why spare enemy cities in a nuclear attack prompted by extreme Soviet attack upon Europe? The answer is as simple as it is upsetting to established patterns of strategic thought. Our ultimate deterrent power is that we hold enemy cities as hostages, and the enemy knows it. The bargaining power over him that these hostages give us is an asset we should be loath to throw away. We surely want to compel restraint in whatever retaliation he is capable of after our attack, and the way to compel restraint is to bring home to the enemy that most of his civilization remains hostage to us, and that it survives contingent upon his own restraint. With great and secure strategic power, we can withhold enough from an initial counter-military attack

to keep his cities always under an overriding threat. To leave his war industry alive another day or two is, contrary to yesterday's dogma, a trivial price. To leave untouched those military control facilities that are in cities may, in contrast, be costly because it permits him to retaliate; or it may yield enormous benefit, because only then can enemy political leaders stop or restrain retaliation. The measure of this last gain or cost must be left open. But we may choose, by city-sparing, to carry the power to deter powerfully through nuclear war, rather than deem deterrence wholly to have failed if nuclear war occurred. And for this element of American policy and capabilities, as with emphasis upon conventional forces, our seriousness is demonstrated in the most tangible way. We are spending billions of dollars to purchase the necessary capabilities.

In describing this novel possibility in our nuclear policy, the term "Counterforce" is best avoided. Traditionally this term has implied the all-out strike, with city destruction regarded as bonus rather than bane. The opponents of traditional Counterforce, therefore, find it attractive only when it can confidently be expected to be nearly 100 per cent effective, forecast dimmer and dimmer hopes for such effectiveness, and so dismiss the strategy. But city-sparing becomes more important, not less, as enemy retaliatory capability becomes less vulnerable to the classic counterforce strategy. If a nation is sure that hitting the enemy all-out will lead to intolerable counter-retaliation, then it must gamble on inducing restraint in the

enemy rather than on reducing his capability. It may well choose to do so by restrained counter-military attack even when most enemy forces are thought to be vulnerable, as the best of bad gambles in a situation desperate by assumption. The novel aspect of possible American nuclear strategies rests firmly upon a non-obsolescing concept of what not to hit. What specifically it is feasible to hit instead may change, although common sense suggests that no collection of military targets is likely to be composed entirely either of easy or hard targets. At any moment of time there will be a mix. Consider the strategic retaliatory program that we know most about, which is the American. Now and in the foreseeable future it contains some soft, fixed elements that are expected to be vulnerable as well as some that are hard or mobile; and no doubt it contains some elements that are not expected to be vulnerable that will unfortunately turn out to be. Unless the enemy is in magically better shape, a city-sparing attack against him will not lack for important targets.

Given its ability to hit both enemy capability and intent, American nuclear protection for NATO continues to have great comparative political appeal. Note where the hypothetical situation now ends that begins, implausibly, with extreme Soviet attack confined to Europe, and proceeds to an American retaliatory attack upon Russia. If this be a damaging but city-sparing attack, it is Khrushchev, not President Kennedy, whose military decision then comes closest to facing the exaggeration of "suicide" as an alternative. The risk that the Soviets might face such a paralyzing choice is itself a great deterrent to any such extreme attack upon Europe in the first place. Barring always

that the Soviet leaders are blind or mad, this makes such an attack exceedingly unlikely. Yet even if it happened, an American city-sparing reaction is the best remaining chance that deterrence for Europe will be replaced by meaningful defense. The restraining power upon the Soviets will be tremendous to keep the Red Army and medium-range missiles in check.

If America supplies the best ultimate deterrent, plus the last best hope in war for stopping short of a holocaust, Europeans more than anyone should wish to make sure that this deterrent is able to perform. But could our strategic forces fulfill their promise if concurrently a force de frappe were doing what it will presumably be designed to do? Suppose it destroys Soviet cities while American forces are taking pains to spare them! Would Soviet political leaders then have reason to be restrained? In their rage and dismay would they have time to reason? Indeed, would they be alive to order any restraint? What hope there would be depends crucially upon tight operational control of all striking forces, designed and coordinated to supply maximum leverage to one concurrent offer of terms. Both politically and militarily NATO nuclear policy requires what General de Gaulle so publicly despises--Integration. A world with such terrible weapons is too small for anything else.

Granted, general war is improbable; and even if it comes a force de frappe might cooperate in operations, might even have become formally integrated to insure coordination, or might be simply inactive or ineffective. The worst situation is unlikely to arise. Where the fate of all NATO may hang in the balance, however, even very small

probabilities need to be taken seriously. Independent nuclear operations have become anachronisms to be consistently opposed, not subsidized. This proposition applies as much to Bomber Command, of course, as to a force de frappe. But with Bomber Command we have operational coordination through the same unified target planning that coordinates our services, and Britain's 1962 White Paper on Defense speaks no longer of a British Deterrent, but of British "contribution to the Western strategic deterrent."

General de Gaulle speaks otherwise, and surely we should accord him the honor of believing that he means exactly what he says, especially when he takes such pains to be clear and eloquent. And we should respectfully disagree. About our nuclear aid to Britain, which is so galling to France, we can try not to exacerbate matters in the future and reasonably explain the past. Born of shared wartime nuclear and bomber programs, and nurtured by the earliest postwar governments, the origins of cooperation are not hard to explain. It is far easier not to create a Bomber Command than to kill one that flourished in victorious war. Also Anglo/American cooperation took place in the context of strategic thought that moved but slowly from consideration of cities as the natural targets to cities as bonus targets to, possibly, exempt targets. Consequently integration in operations used to appear easy and desirable, rather than hard and imperative. Finally, aid has been continuously reciprocal, without the distressing spectacle of an ally conspicuously withholding needed facilities until America has been bludgeoned into assistance. Hard bargaining there undoubtedly was, but bases have been continuously

available to our airplanes, complete with nuclear storage, and very recently we have the Polaris base in Scotland and use of Christmas Island. For all these reasons, past aid to Bomber Command can be rationalized as a special case. Continuance of special cooperation is nonetheless a pity, and certainly we should not replace the Bluestreak missile whose production the British have cancelled with Polaris or its equivalent. Our policy toward the United Kingdom should likewise not be treated in narrowly Anglo-American terms, but should be made compatible with our global arms policy.

III

If American opposition to independent national deterrent forces elsewhere is well-based in global arms imperatives, these should also constrain American independence. We cannot simultaneously preach Atlantic community and practice unimpaired sovereignty on life-and-death matters. If we should try to dismiss vulnerable and proud allies with but vague and secretive reassurances, we shall provoke anxiety and resentment rather than cooperation. We must somehow square the circle, and reconcile the operational need for unitary nuclear control with allied political participation and partnership.

To repeat, the most important step is the one we took a long time ago to pledge ourselves to common defense so that, for example, a nuclear bomb on West Germany would provoke an appropriate American counter no less than would a bomb on Maine. We are now taking other steps to reassure and inform our NATO allies about our defense policies and capabilities, and these could be very important. For instance, if we fail to provide data sufficient for our allies thoroughly to criticize and review our strategic capabilities relative to the Soviets, they may doubt Western superiority. If one globally integrated force is to be the ultimate custodian of their interests, our allies are surely entitled to know that this force is ample and securely protected. Yet even this minimum of reassurance involves information about what the Soviets have, estimates about how it might be used in the manner worst for the West, and about likely outcomes given the ability of our forces to survive and respond. Such information is not lightly held nor given, but, with appropriate security safeguards, its

sharing fulfills a deep political obligation. Our allies are also entitled to be convinced that we are not skimping in our strategic budget at their expense, for example, by failing to cover a known Soviet medium-range missile site in our target planning while we do cover a known intercontinental missile site. Such information is still more delicate, but the worst for a security officer is yet to come. Our allies ought to know and influence the general outlines of plans for various contingencies, so that the intellectual core of our policies is as reassuring to them as our capabilities.

How much is being done about sharing such information cannot be publicly known, although the Communiqué after the NATO Ministerial Meeting in Athens this Spring made clear that some progress has been made. Secretary McNamara's policy statement at Ann Arbor is explicit: "We want and need a greater degree of alliance participation in formulating nuclear weapons policy to the greatest extent possible." The United States has shared more knowledge with its partners about the What and How of our nuclear power, and is open to counsel about the When. Here arises that dilemma summed up in each ally's desire to possess both a trigger and a safety catch, while denying them to other allies so that strategic power be neither too loosely controlled nor paralyzed by multiple vetoes. Perhaps this dilemma is best resolved along the lines apparently now being attempted, which seem to involve no diffusion of physical control but an attempt to achieve a consensus about the general circumstances for nuclear employment. A skeptic may find the United States here cast in the role of the dictatorial secretary of a committee who guards jealously his prerogative to write

what the "sense of the meeting" was. Nonetheless, NATO consultations about what should govern nuclear employment matter deeply to all, and, incidentally, should serve to bring home to others that it is not America alone that blocks some aspirants from uniquely influential positions. Even where consensus in NATO cannot be achieved, participation in moving toward partial agreement should satisfy some national desires and clarify matters for all.

An Atlantic Deterrent requires no less than this, but does it require more? If more is needed beyond shared understanding and as full political consultation as possible, allied physical participation is possible, even extending to a role in the most sensitive area of Command and Control. A component of the Atlantic Deterrent could be European, and could be organized as a symbol of unity in the West. Any one of many technological alternatives is possible for this component in terms of various basing and delivery-vehicle combinations, but technical discussion can be minimized here. The political image should be the dominant one, provided only that suitable protection and secure control be supplied in any one of several ways. One possible combination was suggested by President Kennedy in May last year when he spoke at Ottawa about "the possibility of eventually establishing a NATO sea-borne missile force which would be truly multilateral in ownership and control, if this should be desired and found feasible by our allies once NATO's non-nuclear goals have been achieved."

Clearly this suggestion is conditional, as it should be. The United States does not need such a force for any overriding military reason, and the test of its need should be European enthusiasm. If

European NATO members are satisfied with new assurances and a greater political voice in nuclear matters, splendid. Or even if dissatisfied, they disagree more than they agree about further steps, it is only prudent that we not push for measures that breed more discord than harmony. But if there are deep-seated pressures in Europe for a nuclear force that is not wholly American, here is a way to meet them. The American offer is unprecedented for all its necessary caution, and Europeans need only agree in order to achieve such a force.

Unlike a force de frappe, such a force would symbolize interdependence rather than national dependence, especially if the meaning of "truly multilateral" were made clear. A sea-borne force could be made international in ownership and operation, down to and including mixed ship crews of different nationalities, so that not even one ship with its missiles could revert as an operable force to any nation in time of crisis or internal unrest. People worry little today about "Ultras" coming into power over SAC or Bomber Command, but if the number of national nuclear powers grows large, the specter of bellicose control, like those of heightened risks of accidental and catalytic war, cannot be ignored. If there is to be any growth in the number of nuclear powers, better a safeguarded collective addition than many national ones.

Nor should the possibility be dismissed that a European force could lessen the number of nuclear powers rather than increase it. This year Great Britain has V-Lancers, and next year France will have some Mirage IV fighter-bombers. On the other hand, Bluestreak has been cancelled and the British speak only of prolonging the life of

the V-Bombers for a few years with air-to-surface missiles. What then follows? France says that she will have an operational missile force before the decade is out, but this is years away. Perhaps French governments will persevere in seeking missiles of their own, perhaps not. Surely their future choices will not be totally independent of costs and alternatives. Is it beyond the ingenuity of such experienced powers as France and Great Britain to devise a political compromise in terms of a NATO deterrent acceptable to all, while they gracefully phase out outmoded airplane forces?

If they try, the awkward question will, of course, be that of control. We must return to the multi-trigger and safety-catch dilemma. The symbols of European uniforms on ships that carry part of the ultimate deterrent are important, as is the assignment of American Polaris submarines to a NATO Commander. Control over firing missiles from a multilateral force is more important still, but so hard an issue that many find it impossible. Yet it can be solved, if necessary, along familiar lines. What most worries some Europeans is that there would be no guaranteed nuclear response by America after a Soviet attack on Europe that overwhelms non-nuclear defense possibilities. If we let a multilateral NATO force be designed to insure European control over some nuclear response in this worst case for them, we give them a trigger for the case where we already expect to respond. Consequently we give nothing away if the nature of the response fits our global operations. This vital proviso can be simply met, for example, by keeping the missiles of the European force aimed at key vulnerable Soviet military installations. These installations are

almost certain to be included as targets within any strike we launch, unlike less vulnerable military targets that we may not be able to hit and very vulnerable people that we may not want to hit. So the requirements for integrated operations can be met, although doubtless far more complex variants for targetting and other operational aspects would be better than this illustrative crude one.

The political essentials are more troublesome. Assured response implies that the North Atlantic Council will pre-authorize the Commander of a multilateral force to retaliate against overwhelming Soviet attack, for time will not permit consultation then and the enemy must not be allowed to expect that the most reluctant among fifteen nations would stop retaliation. Do Europeans really want control made so grimly explicit, with its feared automaticity in any nuclear response? Perhaps they do not, in which case their public admissions will be clarifying to them in their own parliamentary debates. If they shrink from assured response in the worst cases of Soviet attack, what are national deterrents credible against? NATO debates should also be illuminating, for the more restrictive our allies care to make any nuclear response the more they must admit the utility of non-nuclear alternatives in credibly facing Soviet challenges. Facing the issue will be unpleasant but educational. Probably restraints upon any automatic element in response that NATO will authorize will be severe, which is good. There must be an irreducible element, for no sudden removal of the White House and related top political echelons can be allowed to promise immunity to the Soviets. A little more is dangerous, but not unthinkable. What could safely be allowed,

although left to European initiatives for advocacy, would be a firing pre-authorization that falls far short of response based either upon fallible radar warning systems or sweeping military autonomy. Yet such authorization can still insure against paralysis of the NATO multilateral force by any one of fifteen nations in the worst of military contingencies for Europe.

Constructive alternatives to a proliferation of national nuclear forces thus are possible for NATO, up to and including a militarily meaningful NATO deterrent if it be necessary to go this far. The United States has made these alternatives possible, perhaps not fully, clearly, or consistently, but nonetheless publicly, and at the cost of renouncing any narrow interpretation of purely national interests. We have a policy, and it is a good one. Now is not the time to abandon the policy and please France, but to improve and solidify it as we move toward greater Atlantic partnership.